

VZCZCXRO6432
PP RUEHPB
DE RUEHSV #0273/01 1352144
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 152144Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0055
INFO RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1684
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0097
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0079
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 1256
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1452
RUEHNZ/AMCONSUL AUCKLAND 0444
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 0854
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SUVA 000273

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [MARR](#) [ASEC](#) [FJ](#)
SUBJECT: EU PRESSES FIJI INTERIM GOVERNMENT TO HONOR
COMMITMENTS; RESULTS LACKING SO FAR

REF: SUVA 241

Classified By: CDA Ted Mann per 1.4 (B,D).

Summary

11. (C) The EU Representative to Fiji, along with the French and UK heads of mission, met with interim Foreign Minister Nailatikau May 11 to express concern about the apparent lack of movement by Fiji's interim government in meeting its commitments to the EU. The EU representatives told Nailatikau "significant actions" such as lifting the current state of emergency are needed. They also expressed concerns about media freedom, the recent decision to post soldiers at police stations and the continued appointment of military personnel to civilian government positions. Nailatikau offered few substantive responses, but did commit to keep talking. EU-IG meetings will take place every two weeks to review IG progress in meeting its commitments. In light of a new spate of interrogations and alleged beatings at the military barracks, human rights seems likely to head the agenda of the next EU-IG meeting. End summary.

EU Meeting with IG - Focus on the State of Emergency

12. (C) EU Representative Roberto Ridolfi, French Ambassador Jean-Francois Bouffandeau and UK High Commissioner Roger Sykes met with interim Foreign Minister Nailatikau in Suva May 11. They told Nailatikau the interim government (IG) needs to take "significant actions" that implement its commitments to the EU. They emphasized the importance of following through on the IG's commitment to lift the public emergency regulations by the end of May. Bouffandeau and Sykes told us they are taking a "wait and see" attitude and would not speculate on how the EU might react if the regulations are extended. If the state of emergency is not lifted, they said, the EU expects a full explanation, including specific information on the IG's "security concerns." Bouffandeau and Sykes discounted the May 14 press release from the Ministry of Home Affairs that most media have interpreted as announcing the continuation of the state of emergency. They said the IG sends out so many mixed or inaccurate messages that it is very often very difficult to determine its true intentions.

Other Concerns - Soldiers at Police Stations,
Military Appointments, GCC Status

13. (C) Bouffandeau and Sykes told us they raised a number of other issues at their meeting with the interim FM, including media freedom, the recent directive to have soldiers posted at police stations, and appointments of military officials to IG positions. Nailatikau said these appointments were either "temporary" or "entirely based on merit." (Note: The EU representatives did not get into specifics with Nailatikau, but were referring to the recent appointment of RFMF Colonel Apakuki Kurusiga to head a team auditing the Native Land Trust Board, and the appointment of former army lawyer Ana Rokomokoti as a new resident magistrate. Both Kurusiga and Rokomokoti are strong coup supporters; both are on our "visa ban" list.) Nailatikau insisted the practice of placing soldiers at police stations was justified, since it would help fight crime. "Every country in the world could say that," shot back Ridolfi, "It's not an acceptable excuse." Nailatikau said the postings are only temporary, perhaps for only a few weeks. "When the crime rate goes down, they'll leave," he said. When the EU representatives raised their concern about the suspension of activities of the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC), Nailatikau insisted that body had become "politicized" and needed to be reformed. (Nailatikau's nomination as Vice President, of course, was rejected by the chiefs).

Regular EU-IG Meetings to Continue

14. (C) Nailatikau suggested, and the EU representatives quickly agreed, that the two sides should meet every two weeks to review IG progress in meeting the commitments it made to the EU. Nailatikau promised that one of the

SUVA 00000273 002 OF 002

senior-level officials involved with the EU talks, Nailatikau, interim Finance Minister Chaudhry, or interim Attorney General Sayed Khaiyum, would attend these meetings.

Human Rights Issues May Top the Next Meeting's Agenda

15. (C) Julia Painting, the Deputy UK High Commissioner, told us human rights issues were only lightly touched upon during the meeting with Nailatikau. That may change during the next IG-EU meeting, she said. Last week, former Minister of State in the SDL government Losena Salabula was taken to the barracks, interrogated, and allegedly told to warn ousted PM Qarase and other former SDL members that comments against the IG or the military would not be tolerated. Businessman Ulaiasi Taoi was reportedly brought to the barracks May 13 and beaten, apparently as part of the IG's campaign to shut down anti-IG blog sites (septel). Taoi was brought to the camp and again interrogated May 15. He was later released unharmed. Given these latest developments, said Painting, there is little reason to be optimistic that the IG will take the positive actions the EU seeks.

MANN